

Cal Poly Views
**Indian Culture with
Dr. Joan Greenway**

Cal Poly Pomona University Library

Indian Culture Summary

Cal Poly Views was a weekly interview series broadcast on radio station KWOW-AM. Episodes were 15 minutes long and were hosted by Cal Poly Pomona Director of News and Publications, Ed Pierce, in conversation with Cal Poly Pomona faculty or administrators on general interest topics.

Dr. Joan Greenway was a professor of Anthropology at Cal Poly Pomona. Her field work in anthropology has been in Australia and other South Pacific areas, as well as the Indians of North America in Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico. She discusses plans to recreate a Gabrielino Indian village on the Cal Poly Pomona campus.

Subject Headings

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Cal Poly Views Indian Culture with Dr. Joan Greenway

March 17, 1986

*Interview conducted by Ed Pierce
Transcribed by Lorecel Gravino*

KWOW presents "Cal Poly Views."

EP: Hello everyone, welcome to KWOW's presentation of "Cal Poly Views." Fifteen minutes each week devoted to interviews concerning subjects of current general interest and featuring faculty or administrators from Cal Poly Pomona. This is your host Ed Pierce, talking today with Dr. Joan Greenway, Professor of Anthropology in the Social Sciences Department at the University. Together we'll discuss Indian culture born again from the Spadra Landfill.

EP: Today's guest, Dr. Greenway, has been at the University since 1971. In that time, she served as chairman of the Social Sciences Department and for five years was Dean of Continuing Education at Cal Poly. Her field work in anthropology has been in Australia and other South Pacific areas, as well as the Indians of North America in Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico. Welcome Dr. Greenway.

JG: Good morning.

EP: Tell us what we mean, when we say Indian culture born again from the Spadra Landfill.

JG: Well I think we mean a whole multiple of things. Perhaps we should quickly say the Spadra Landfill itself, that the University has entered into a rather historic resource conservation project with the landfill of sanitation district and that in return for partial use of some of our canyons on a temporary basis, we will in the future get back the entire Spadra Landfill area. Some 200 acres or so, and it will be tailored to our educational and recreational purposes.

EP: And one of the things that we intend to do it is to build, reconstruct, an Indian village.

JG: Yes, that's the concept.

EP: And am I right that it will be done by students who will first do research?

JG: Exactly.

EP: And reconstruct.

JG: Exactly. This whole partnership with the Los Angeles County sanitation district organization and with the university is a very exciting one because it enables us to have a tremendous living lab right at our side door as it were, and the sanitation district is very generous

in the research money that they are going to grant because it will be so related to all contemporary issues in Southern California. I mean what to do with trash? Everybody wants their trash collected, nobody wants a landfill in their area.

EP: The only thing I think we need to point out about the Spadra Landfill, that it does not—

JG: Yes—

EP: Contain—

JG: Never—

EP: Toxic materials. It's done under the auspices of county government.

JG: Exactly.

EP: Not for profit.

JG: No, this is government agencies, and they are very meticulous about the dump.

EP: When do you expect to begin the reconstruction or construction of the Indian village?

JG: Well, it could be within the next 12 months. This is what's so exciting about it because it will be going on an area of the eventual total project that has never been landfill and therefore you see we can begin almost immediately, because we don't have to wait for the completion of the fill and the covering with the final contouring and so on.

EP: Is one of the reasons that we're doing this because it's appropriate, but we have found artifacts and ancient Indian *objets d'art* here on the campus?

JG: Yes, we have. It's been a kind of a sporadic thing but every time that we have a significant building erected for example, the Science Building. When the new Science Building was built the foundations were particularly deep because it was to support, as you know, that roof garden and so on and so the building itself demanded quite extensive excavation. And during that we were finding *manos* and *metates* that women had used to grind seeds on. We found all kinds of flints and arrowheads and other artifacts of original Indian use in this area.

EP: What tribe or tribes do you believe left them there?

JG: We know that we are right smack in the middle of Gabrielino territory. The Gabrielinos were the wealthiest, the most complex, the most heavily socially-organized of all the Indians in this particular Southern Californian region.

EP: And multi-structured.

JG: Oh, multi-structured, yeah and so what we're hoping to do is construct a Gabrielino village over there by the Spadra Landfill site that will be open to the public, so they can come and see how the original Californians lived in this area. What their houses were like, they had sweat lodges and so we plan to build a sweat lodge. This wouldn't involve just the Anthropology students. We plan to try and recreate the ancient botany of the area and so we'll have horticultural students, some students in the botany area who will be researching and replanting those native plants and materials as much as possible. We're also going to have a stream that runs down so we can have the marsh plants which were very important to these people, very important. And we will recreate a little marsh area, which may in fact even attract some migratory birds, who knows? Ed.

EP: Tell us what other tribes have been identified as being located in the areas—

JG: Yes—

EP: —from Cal Poly, eastward to San Bernardino and west to Los Angeles.

JG: Right, the Gabrielino are very widespread. Most of Los Angeles county and a large part of Orange County were Gabrielino peoples. As you go further east, you run into the boundaries of the Cahuilla and you had both desert Cahuilla and mountain Cahuilla people and they, several of them, are still on the Morongo reservation, out by Banning and the Beaumont area out there. When you get over into Palm Springs proper, of course, you're into the Agua Caliente people, but then as we come back this way again, to the Gabrielinos kind of south and west were Luiseño people. The Luiseño ran all the way down to the Diegueno, who were in the San Diego region. Basically, these people had some particular differences that set them apart, for example a Gabrielino who lived right here where Cal Poly is, right on Kellogg Hill. The Gabrielino didn't make pottery; they had steatite. Steatite is a stone that's pretty soft and they carved beautiful bowls and vessels for carrying their food, for carrying water and so on. So, they had steatite and therefore never had pottery. Luiseño who didn't have access to steatite, made pottery, and yet they were the next-door neighbors.

EP: There are two which I'm aware of what you mentioned which were Los Serranos and the Chumash.

JG: Yes, sure.

EP: Where are they?

JG: Well, the Serranos of course, the name means “the mountain dwellers” and so they were a little bit further into the interior, as far as our own San Gabriel mountains around us here are concerned. The Gabrielinos were seen to be a part of the front mountains and the adjacent

foothills, but then the Serranos who stayed in the mountains, would be the ones further inside. And the Chumash, around the Santa Barbara area when you get far enough west, but you're out of Gabrielino territory you're into sort of the Fernandeano, or the San Fernando Valley region. They were still largely Gabrielino-style culture. But then you hit the Chumash and of course, Santa Barbara makes a great deal of its Chumash.

EP: Yes.

JG: But they shared some myths with the Gabrielino. The Gabrielino believed that the porpoises were protecting the world. They believed that.

EP: Was this in the 1500s and 1600s, or do we know it was that far back, but it was in the 16th and 17th at least?

JG: Oh, their habitation here, seems to go back in a pretty well unbroken line for very much longer than that, very much longer than that. It's possible archaeologically to reconstruct their own growth and development from more simple culture to more complex. So that things like the very elaborate steatite, some of it I think was a part of their jimsonweed cult because some of the steatite was so carved and so fragile you couldn't have crushed berries and things in it and used it in the normal cooking. It clearly was just to hold I think, the religious drink which was jimsonweed in saltwater. This was believed to put you very much in contact with Chingichngish, who was the head of this particular cult. But the most extraordinary thing is how little we can find of the Gabrielino. They were everywhere and yet they disappeared very, very fast. A great tragedy and a great loss.

EP: Did this occur in the first half of the 1800s?

JG: Yes—

EP: Or before?

JG: It probably began a little before that, because as you know any time that a culture from another area impacts, it brings not only force unfortunately, but also disease and so without actually destroying people the disease will do that.

EP: Uh huh.

JG: Simple measles, if you live in an area that's never had it, that will kill thousands of people in a week. A measles epidemic can.

EP: As the white population migrated west—

JG: Yes.

EP: And the occupation and the gold rush—

JG: Exactly.

EP: Those are all factors that displaced the Indians—

JG: Exactly.

EP: And when you displace them, you really wrote their death sentence.

JG: Absolutely. Because they were ecologically, is so in tune that your entire cultural strategy for survival and happiness is tied into the resources of the land you're on. If you're moved off your land you do not understand how to survive. You don't have any strategies for being a mountain person if you've always been a prairie person. You have no strategy for being a coastal Indian if you've always been a desert Indian. Your culture that you've learned that has been handed down to you, no longer works.

EP: Was there trading between—

JG: Yes.

EP: The Chumash, the Gabrielinos, Serranos?

JG: Oh yes, and usually you had it in groups of three and your trading was not just trading of goods, they were military alliances. They had very sophisticated military alliances. The Gabrielino were allied with the Chumash and also with the Salinan, who were even further up the coast, towards San Francisco. The Gabrielino were also allied with the Chumash and the Cahuilla, that we've spoken of, out by Palm Springs. The Cahuilla and the Maricopa, who were way over by the Colorado River, so you know an enormous amount of this—

JG: Your chief, you see was a very powerful man. Very significant figure. They were divided into little tribelets or lineages and so whichever little tribelet lived here would have had a chief of great power, who would have married important daughters of important chiefs from other little tribelets all around and through them. He didn't work, the chief did not work, he had much too much to do politically, maintaining the well-being of the people.

EP: So, it wasn't one chief, per say for all of the Gabrielinos, there were several sub—

JG: No, exactly. You had a leader but a very significant man. There were nine classes of individuals in each little group and as you might imagine with the missionizing of the Indians, the ones who may be in the bottom half of that nine, they missionized pretty easily because they've been probably shoved around a bit anyway—

EP: Uh huh.

JG: Right down through the growth of this culture, and so they rather meekly become workers at a mission. But those top five classes are not about to yield up their authority, their status, their prestige and become part of a virtually enslaved group toiling in a garden. So of course, they pay the penalty.

EP: And they had real culture they used, as I understand they had commerce.

JG: Oh yes, they had money, they used shells. Shell beads were their currency. And you strung the beads to a certain length, it was called a [*toko?*] and it fitted if you string it on your thumb. It then would span around your hand and come back to the end of your forefinger. That is like saying one dollar, you know. The beads that would measure down my thumb, around my hand and back up to the end of my finger and so, so many of those were the value of the goods that you were trading in. Very complex.

EP: And it's the Gabrielino that we intend to show the kind of life and village—

JG: Yes.

EP: That they had in the reconstruction—

JG: Yes, and so, this is why I say, Indian Culture born again from the Spadra Landfill.

EP: Well, thank you Dr. Greenway and thank you ladies and gentlemen, for listening to this week's edition of "Cal Poly Views." Fifteen minutes devoted to discussing topics of current and general interest if there are subjects which you would like to hear discussed by faculty or administrative experts from Cal Poly Pomona, please write to Cal Poly Views," Office of News and Publications 3801 W. Temple Ave., Pomona 91768. We hope you'll join us again next week at the same time for another interesting interview when KWOW presents "Cal Poly Views." This is your host, Ed Pierce, speaking.

End of interview

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